

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 5 p.m.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 7 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 5 p.m.

□ 1714

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska) at 5 o'clock and 14 minutes p.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1469, 1997 EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR RECOVERY FROM NATURAL DISASTERS, AND FOR OVERSEAS PEACEKEEPING EFFORTS, INCLUDING THOSE IN BOSNIA

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order at any time today to consider a conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1469) making emergency supplemental appropriations for recovery from natural disasters, and for overseas peacekeeping efforts, including those in Bosnia, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and for other purposes, and that all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration be waived, and that the conference report be considered as read when called up.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the previous order of the House, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 1469) making emergency supplemental appropriations for recovery from natural disasters and overseas peacekeeping efforts, including those in Bosnia, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the conference report is considered as having been read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of Wednesday, June 4, 1997, at page H3442.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. LIVINGSTON] and the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. OBEY], each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. LIVINGSTON].

□ 1715

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the conference report to accompany H.R. 1469, and that I may include tabular and extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

(Mr. LIVINGSTON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to once again come to the House with the conference report on the fiscal year 1997 emergency supplemental appropriations bill, H.R. 1469.

As Members of the House may recall, on April 24 of this year, the Committee on Appropriations reported out the bill, and roughly 2 weeks ago we had the bill on the floor. Unfortunately, we were unable to complete the conference quickly, and we had to adjourn over the Memorial Day recess prior to the completion of this very, very important bill that will provide disaster relief to the citizens of some 35 States.

Today we hope to remedy that situation because, after several weeks of negotiating with the Senate on the differences between the House and the Senate versions of this legislation, we have concluded conference yesterday and are able to bring this conference agreement to the House so that the process of providing that very necessary recovery for the vast number of natural disasters that have occurred around the country this year can be maintained.

This conference agreement includes \$8.9 billion in new spending authority for fiscal year 1997, of which the discretionary portion is fully offset by the rescission of previously appropriated funds and by including other offsets.

I might stress, Mr. Speaker, that the conference report, as promised when we debated this issue on the floor 2 weeks ago, is fully, and I repeat fully, offset in budget authority.

The major reasons for the increase over the House reported bill are an increase for veterans compensation and pensions and SSI, Supplemental Security Income, benefits for legal aliens. These were deemed by the administration to be necessary to provide for those benefit programs through the end of the fiscal year, and the conference

agreed that the benefits, if not paid for, might leave some individuals without compensation before October 1, 1997. It is intended that these sums, these additional sums, be included in this bill so that those people might be provided for.

A summary of the total conference report on the supplemental includes the following major categories: Nearly \$5.6 billion for disaster recovery, as I said earlier, for 35 States; another \$268 million for other appropriations; \$240 million for SSI benefits for legal aliens. All of that is offset in the domestic category of the budget by \$6.092 billion in rescissions. That leaves a deficit, or an extra amount of offset by about \$21 million.

In the peacekeeping provisions or the defense side of the bill we have some \$1.929 billion allocated to repay the Defense Department for what has already been outlaid in Bosnia and elsewhere in other operations around the world, and that is offset with moneys provided from the Defense Department of exactly that same amount of money.

Likewise, there are mandatory appropriations in the conference agreement, mostly for VA, of \$937 million. And, as I indicated, the entire discretionary amount is offset in budget authority.

There is \$3.3 billion of disaster relief bill going directly to FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, so that they can assist those people who have been devastated by floods, tornados, and other natural disasters.

There is \$500 million in this bill going to Community Development Block Grants. The people in Minnesota and the Dakotas have indicated that they are concerned that the traditional assistance of FEMA has not been direct enough, has not been flexible enough to go to the people who have lost their businesses, lost their homes, and who are virtually thrown out of their entire towns. And in order to get those folks back and their cities working, they feel that the Community Development Block Grants will be more effective in solving these problems. Hopefully, that will be the case.

There is \$650 million to be applied to transportation facility repair; \$585 million for flood control and navigation facility repair; \$166 million for watershed and flood prevention; \$197 million for the national park repairs; \$928 million for veterans compensation and pensions, as I mentioned earlier; and \$240 million for continued SSI benefits for legal aliens; \$1.26 billion for peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia and \$510 million for peacekeeping efforts in southwest Asia.

I would like to remind all my colleagues again that at the beginning of the 104th Congress; that is, the Congress preceding this one, we in the majority, the Republicans, began a policy of paying for all supplemental appropriations, saying to the country that no longer will we opt for the tradition that has been established in the past of